

Israel Comes to Egypt

Genesis 42:13-14 And they said, Thy servants [are] twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest [is] this day with our father, and one [is] not. **14** And Joseph said unto them, That [is it] that I spake unto you, saying, Ye [are] spies:

Joseph announced the verdict of their trial the summary judgment was Guilty! Under the rules of that ancient society, every accused was considered guilty until proved innocent and the burden of proof was always upon the defendants.

Genesis 42:15-17 Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. **16** Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether [there be any] truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye [are] spies. **17** And he put them all together into ward three days.

So the accused must prove themselves to be innocent.

After a period of three days Joseph decided to again reviewed the case ... Joseph would test their story and let them prove their innocence by sending one of them back for the younger brother they had mentioned.

Genesis 42:18-25 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; [for] I fear God: **19** If ye [be] true [men], let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: **20** But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. **21** And they said one to another, We [are] verily guilty concerning our brother (Joseph), in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. **22** And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you,

saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. 23 And they knew not that Joseph understood [them]; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. 24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. 25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

Joseph reduced the number to be held hostage from ten to only one who would be left in prison. Joseph remembered the members of his father's house and thought of their dire need of food, and therefore he sent them all home except Simeon, their sacks laden with grain, and their money returned.

Jacob would not allow Benjamin to return to Egypt, until the grain they brought back began to run out ... so Joseph sent them back with Benjamin and he sent double the money ...

Genesis 43:16-17 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring [these] men home, and slay, and make ready; for [these] men shall dine with me at noon. 17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

Later in the history of Israel the domestic architecture of the Land of Israel was the typical four-room house with pillars. This style was widespread in the Iron Age I, 1200–1000 BC and continued during the Iron Age II, 1000–586 BC. During the whole First Temple Period this style dominated and was the one architectural form unique to Israel. Where did it come from? Now one has been found by Professor Bietak at the Hyksos capital of Avaris which is Tell El Daba from 1600 BC.

Genesis 43:18-32 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money

that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.

Genesis 43:26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which [was] in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. 27 And he asked them of [their] welfare, and said, [Is] your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? [Is] he yet alive? 28 And they answered, Thy servant our father [is] in good health, he [is] yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. 29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, [Is] this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. 30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought [where] to weep; and he entered into [his] chamber, and wept there. 31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. 32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that [is] an abomination unto the Egyptians.

Genesis 44:1-6 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks [with] food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. 2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. 4 [And] when they were gone out of the city, [and] not [yet] far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? 5 [Is] not this [it] in which my lord drinketh, and

whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. 6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

Genesis 44:9-13 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. 10 And he said, Now also [*let*] it [*be*] according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. 11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. 12 And he searched, [*and*] began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

Soon, Benjamin was charged with theft. But Joseph then decreed that everyone but Benjamin was free to leave. Now Judah beginning in V:14 repents and mans-up for his father Jacob or Israel's sake and begs to take Benjamin's place as Joseph's slave ...

Genesis 44:25-34 And our father said, Go again, [*and*] buy us a little food. 26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother [*be*] with us. 27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two [*sons*]: 28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: 29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. 30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad [*be*] not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; 31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad [*is*] not [*with us*], that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever. 33 Now

therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. 34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad [be] not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Judah repented and fervently pleaded from the heart, for his father's sake, that he be kept a slave instead of Benjamin. Whether Joseph had been toying with his brothers, or had been looking for signs of repentance and unselfishness like this is unknown, but his charade came to an end. God Loves a sinner who comes to repentance cf:

Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas [is] here.

Now if we can just figure out what the men of Nineveh did we would know what to do to repent. Well the king of Nineveh proclaimed cf:

Jonah 3:8-10 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that [is] in their hands. 9 Who can tell [if] God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did [it] not.

Luke 13:1-5 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all

men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

There are people today who suppose the ultimate, justification is based upon upon the merit of Christ alone. Repentance, however, stands between every man and the merit which is in Christ Jesus. As Peter said:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

You got to change your mind about your “wicked ways” you can’t take your secret sins with you into the waters of baptism and expect to

Acts 22:16 “wash away thy sins calling upon the name of the Lord”

II Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Acts 17:30-31 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead.

II Peter 3:9-10 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Romans 2:4-10 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God

leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile, 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

Joseph suddenly announced that he wanted to be alone with the Canaanites. The story now reaches its turning point.

Genesis 45:1-11 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. 2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. 3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I [am] Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. 4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I [am] Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years [hath] the famine [been] in the land: and yet [there are] five years, in the which [there shall] neither [be] earing nor harvest. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now [it was] not you [that] sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land

of Egypt. 9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: 10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: 11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet [there are] five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

The brothers were supplied with wagons and food to speed their journey to Canaan and back.

Genesis 45:25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, 26 And told him, saying, Joseph [is] yet alive, and he [is] governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. 27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: 28 And Israel said, [It is] enough; Joseph my son [is] yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

Right here, the die is cast. Jacob and all the children of Israel would go down into Egypt, where their long sojourn God had foretold to Abraham would begin.

Genesis 15:13 And he said unto Ab'-ram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land [that is] not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

Genesis 45:28 And Israel said, [It is] enough; Joseph my son [is] yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

Note also, that Jacob is pointedly referred to here in V:28 as "Israel." It is the covenant relationship of God to His chosen people that the "seed" the Messiah is coming that dominates every word of the Book of Genesis.

What a wonder is this record of HOW it happened! God over-ruled the hatreds, jealousies, and envious wickedness of men to place one of Jacob's sons on the throne of the land of Egypt, who, in time, brought all the descendants of Israel to live there. The Egyptians detested foreigners, especially shepherds; and, thus it would not be easy for the children of Israel or Jacob's descendants to intermarry with the Egyptians as had already begun to happen in Canaan in the case of Judah. Not only that, in Egypt, for several generations they would have the protective arm of a powerful central government which would secure them against hostile attack. Under those divinely appointed conditions, they would indeed grow into a mighty nation! How marvelous are the ways of God and His providence for His Chosen!

Genesis 46:1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

"... Beersheba ..." In a sense, this outpost, was somewhat a "point of no return" on the way to Egypt, lying at the southern tip of the land of Canaan, being also the place where Isaac, the father of Jacob, had lived and had erected an altar unto God. This could possibly be the same altar upon which Jacob offered the sacrifices mentioned here. At any rate, God appeared to him in a vision, thus removing all doubts.

Genesis 46:2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here [am] I.

" And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night ..." As far as the scriptural record goes, this was the last appearance of God to Jacob, there was eight appearances in all: (1) Genesis 28:13; (2) 31:3; (3) 31:11; (4) 32:1; (5) 32:30; (6) 35:1; (7) 35:9; (8) 46:2.

The appearance of God to Jacob were strictly business they came not for the personal benefit of the patriarch Jacob but upon occasions

pertinent to the welfare of the covenant people and coming nation. God did not appear to Jacob and comfort and sooth him that Joseph was alive during those 13 years when Jacob thought he was dead.

" And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night and said, Jacob ..." Note that the terms "Israel" and "Jacob" are here used interchangeably. "In the rest of the Book of Genesis, these names are used indiscriminately and interchangeably."

Genesis 46:3 And he said, I [am] God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

But let it be particularly noticed what God said to Jacob: He told him not to be afraid, but to go on down into Egypt. He promised to be with Jacob and his descendants in Egypt. He promised to bring them up again out of Egypt. He foretold the death of Jacob in Egypt.

Genesis 46:4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up [again]: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

Long afterward, when Joseph himself came to die, he spoke of it, and how God would take up the people out of Egypt and deliver them into the land of Canaan, requesting that the children of Israel would carry along his bones when the promise was fulfilled!

Oh yes, this is the Word of God!

"And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes ..." This is an idiomatic expression which is a prophecy that Joseph shall perform the last rites at his father's death. The closing of the eyes in death was a rite anciently performed by the hands of a loved one. In colonial America, after loving hands had closed the eyes, coins (usually nickels) were placed upon the eyes until rigor mortis ensued. Later after 1864 when the size of a penny was reduced from a "large Cent" to its present size, a penny was used. From this came the

proverb for a petty larceny thief that "He would steal the pennies off a dead man's eyes!"

Genesis 46:28 And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

Judah, in this "going before Israel" is a type of Jesus Christ the Lion of the tribe of Judah our "forerunner" cf:

Hebrews 6: 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, [even] Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Genesis 46:29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

What a remarkable picture the procession of Joseph in the Second Chariot of Egypt must have provided as Joseph, with full honors of the nation, went up to greet his father and welcome him into the land of Goshen!

When Joseph came out to meet them in his chariot, it was a tearful reunion. Joseph coached his father and brothers in what they should say when they meet Pharaoh. They were to tell him that they were not only shepherds, but, that the family had always been shepherds for generations. Joseph wanted his father and brothers settled in the largely undeveloped plain of Goshen, rather than with him in one of the population centers. Goshen contained good pasture land, and the family could keep the lifestyle they had always known in Canaan land.

"To Goshen ..." It was not accidental that Israel came to Goshen; from the very first, Joseph had foreseen that Goshen was the correct place for his father's people. It was primarily pasture land with scant, if any, population. And it provided exactly the isolation that the Hebrews needed if conflict with the populations of Egypt was to be avoided.

Joseph had already cleared this with Pharaoh, even before he had finished testing his brothers, and Pharaoh had already confirmed the place as the location of Israel, but Joseph apparently feared that after Pharaoh's meeting with Joseph, Pharaoh might, as a special favor to Joseph's father, locate his posterity in what the Egyptians might consider a more favorable location. Joseph knew that if the occupation of his kindred as shepherds was clearly understood by Pharaoh, such a change in the plans would not occur.

"And wept on his neck a great while ..." This tearful reunion between Jacob and Joseph was intensely emotional. It is not recorded that either of them said anything for a long time. The long and tearful embrace lasted, and lasted. It was Jacob who broke the posture with words:

Genesis 46:30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou [art] yet alive.

"Now let me die, since I have seen thy face ..." Jacob may indeed have thought that his death was near, but God spared him for many more years to behold the glory of his son Joseph, and to see his posterity get settled in Goshen.

Genesis 46:31-34 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which [were] in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; 32 And the men [are] shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. 33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What [is] your occupation? 34 That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle (shepherding) from our youth even until now, both we, [and] also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd [is] an abomination unto the Egyptians.

"... I will go up, and shew Pharaoh ..." This cannot mean that the coming of Israel was in any manner news to Pharaoh. What was new lay in the fact of their having brought all their properties, consisting largely of great flocks and herds of cattle. That indeed was a new development, for Pharaoh had invited them to come without regard to possessions left behind (Genesis 45:20). Joseph also knew that by stressing their occupation as SHEPHERDS, there would be eliminated the possibility that Pharaoh might seek integration of the people with the Egyptians by settling them up in the cities!

"Thy servants have been keepers of cattle (shepherds) ..." (Genesis 46:34). This should be rendered, "Thy servants are shepherds," for that is what the expression "keepers of cattle" meant. The Good News Bible and other translations have so rendered it. Besides, in Joseph's projection of what he would do (Genesis 46:32), Pharaoh would already have been informed by Joseph himself that his brethren were shepherds. What Joseph guarded against here was any move on the part of his brethren to hide or soften this fact. Joseph himself was certainly not ashamed of it, but he might have feared that some of his brethren might be timid because of it.

ON BEING ASHAMED OF HUMBLE WORK

"Every shepherd is an abomination unto Egyptians ..." This is a sad comment upon their civilization, that those who produced the principal supply of their food should have been despised. There indeed must be discovered one of the reasons why their highly sophisticated and proud civilization eventually perished from the earth. Our Lord Jesus Christ was an apprentice carpenter. Even Jesus' church is reminded that, "We are workers ...!"

This disdain for Shepherds is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible, but it is described vividly in Egyptian literature. This matter of the Hebrews being unacceptable to Egyptians socially, due to their

occupation, must be seen as precisely one of the reasons why God moved them into that situation so they mix. Simeon and Judah, perhaps others, of the Twelve Sons had already broken over the boundary in the marriage of Canaanite wives who were pagans. God's answer to that was the placement of them in a situation where intermarriage with the Egyptians would have been very difficult.

Genesis 47:1-4 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they [*are*] in the land of Goshen. 2 And he took some of his brethren, [*even*] five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. 3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What [*is*] your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants [*are*] shepherds, both we, [*and*] also our fathers. 4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine [*is*] sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

The first two verses here are not to be understood as the original announcement to Pharaoh of the arrival of Israel in Egypt, that being already known, even the place to which they would go having already been determined.

On the other hand, this brings to Pharaoh's attention the added information that Israel had not arrived empty-handed, as they had been invited to do, but they had come with baggage, wagons, flocks, herds - everything that they had!

Also, the formal permission of Pharaoh was required, and this interview afforded the occasion for that. Jacob did not appear at this time, probably being of too advanced an age and in a state of health that made it more appropriate for the sons to negotiate with Pharaoh. Note too, that despite his having oversight of all Egypt, Joseph did not

undertake this settlement of his folks in Goshen without the formal consent of the ruling monarch. This explains the request of the five brothers to be permitted residence in Goshen, stressing their occupation.

Genesis 47:5-6 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: 6 The land of Egypt [*is*] before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest [*any*] men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

Pharaoh's statement "Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee" This is also an acknowledgment of the fact that they were there upon Pharaoh's invitation, as confirmed by his stating again the permission granted along with the invitation for them to live in Egypt.

Pharaoh here not only granted formal royal permission for the settlement in Goshen, not merely through Joseph, but by direct word in the presence of five representatives of Israel, even throwing in the proposition that, if Joseph approved, it would be good to place his own cattle under their supervision!

Genesis 47:7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

The old shepherd, Israel, blessed the monarch himself, a blessing which was to perpetuate that society for several hundreds of years into the future.

It was only after they reversed their policies and began their oppression of Israel that the blessing of God was withdrawn and their nation was eventually destroyed.

Genesis 47:8-10 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old [*art*] thou? 9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage [*are*] an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the

years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. 10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh ..." The word for "blessed," "to bless with an invocation."

This episode is one of the grand scenes of the Bible. Pharaoh was the autocratic ruler of the mightiest nation on earth; Jacob was the patriarchal head of God's Chosen People, through whom redemption would come to all mankind. Jacob was fully conscious of his own status in that situation is evident in what he did. As long as Egypt sheltered and protected the covenant people, that is how long God blessed and protected Egypt. But when another king arose who "knew not Joseph," and when Egypt turned viciously upon the Israel of God, the heavenly blessing was withdrawn, and one disaster after another overwhelmed them. One may wonder if Pharaoh appreciated this blessing. To him, Jacob might have seemed to be merely an old man seeking relief from the starvation that threatened to wipe out his family, but the hand of the Almighty was upholding Jacob, and the blessing of God was surely his to bestow as the greater always blesses the lesser.

"The years of my pilgrimage..." Here is a glimpse of the way Jacob viewed his life. Neither he nor his father ever owned any of the land of promise except the burial place at Mach'-pel-ah and a few acres around She'-chem. "They looked for the city that hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God" Jacob's word here is a testimonial to his acceptance of the promise God made to Abraham, and of his absolute belief in the ultimate fulfillment of it. None of the patriarchs viewed the world as their permanent dwelling place, nor the earth as the true home of the soul. The mightiest king on earth had just given him a deed to Goshen, but Jacob was still a "pilgrim." Our English

word for "pilgrim" literally means "one who crosses the field," and came into usage during the Crusades, when, upon nearly any given morning, settled residents could see a lonely "wanderer" on the way to the Holy Land, "crossing the field." thus:

A pilgrim is one seeking a country that has not yet been reached. The remembrance of this keeps the life God-ward. Its blessedness consists not in present enjoyment, but in preparation for the life to come.

Hebrews 11:8-10 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as [in] a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.

Hebrews 12:22-24 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than [that of] Abel.

Hebrews 11:11-16 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, [so many] as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers

and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that [country] from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better [country], that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

"few and evil have the days ..." Jacob's father and grandfather had attained ages of 175 for Abraham (25:7), and 180 for Isaac (35:28); and Jacob's words here indicated that he did not expect to live as long a life as his "forefathers". Of course, he lived 17 years after he made this statement, but even at 147, his age when he died, his words remained true.

"Evil ..." This is not a reference to the severe and trying experiences which life had brought to him. Not all of the terrible experiences were the result of his own doing, but some were: the preference that his father had for Esau; his purchase of the birthright; the ensuing hatred of Esau; the shameful treatment he received from his father-in-law Laban; the long years of servitude in the outdoors; the unhappiness of his wives due to internal conditions in his family; the hatred of his sons toward Jacob's favorite, Joseph; their sale of Joseph, represented to Jacob as Joseph's death; the rape of Dinah; the shameless massacre of the Shechemites by two of his sons; Joseph's disappearance, Jacob's horror upon learning Benjamin would have to go to Egypt; the following anxiety about him ... all these things left their mark upon the heart of Jacob, hence, his reference to them here.

Sources: KJV Bible, theWord.com, Burton Coffman, BW Johnson, Adam Clark, FF Bruce, McKnight and JW McGarvey, George Faull Commentaries, Archaeology & the Old Testament by Alfred Hoerth,

On the Reliability of the O.T. K.A. Kitchens, Google Images, Halley's Handbook, Wikipedia.